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Lesson Plan on Korea

I. Rationale- In 1886 the USS General Sherman, a naval vessel, sailed up the Han River in Korea looking for trading arrangements with the Korean people. The government of Korea had voiced to the United States that it was not interested in such an agreement. Unfortunately, most of the crew was either captured or killed in an incident that was reported differently by the United States and Korea. This led to a diplomatic mission in 1871 by the United States which again did not turn out well. This idea of “opening” a country for trade has always intrigued me. In United States history, the history books often refer to the “opening of the West” for settlement. I would like to examine this concept of “openings” as it pertains to the overall concepts of manifest destiny and imperialism. Did the United States attempt to coerce or force the Koreans into trade in much the same manner that Native Americans back home were forced into a similar situation? This topic will be explored in a ninth grade United States history class and will cover the important goals and objectives outlined in the state of Ohio’s social studies standards.

II. Goals and Objectives-

- A. Students will explore the concept of “opening” from both the perspective of the country being opened and the country expanding into the opening.
- B. Students will appreciate that point of view is important in looking at issues in history.
- C. Students will explore the concept of manifest destiny as it applied to American interests at home and in East Asia
- D. Students will understand how force or coercion is used to help create “openings” in countries

III. Academic Content Standards for Social Studies- Grades 9-10

A. Social Studies Skills and Methods

1. Benchmark A- Evaluate the reliability and credibility of sources (p. 271)

- a. **Detect bias and propaganda in primary and secondary sources of information**
- b. **Evaluate the credibility of sources for:**
 - 1. **logical fallacies**
 - 2. **consistency of arguments**
 - 3. **unstated assumptions**
 - 4. **bias**
- c. **Analyze the reliability of sources for:**
 - 1. **accurate use of facts**
 - 2. **adequate support of statements**

3. date of publication

B. History

1. **Benchmark C- Analyze the reasons that countries gained control of territory through imperialism and the impact of the people living in the territory that was controlled (p. 254)**
 - a. **Describe the political, economic and social roots of imperialism**

IV. Essential Questions

- A. Is it ever justifiable for a country to force its trade will upon another country without their consent?
- B. Is imperialism ever justified in one country's relationship with another?
- C. Does domestic expansion ultimately lead to overseas expansion?
- D. How does a country justify its imperialistic attitudes, and is it justifiable for other countries to resist imperialism by using force?

V. **Strategy-** This lesson will pick up after students have explored the concept of manifest destiny and how it was used to justify American expansion into the western part of the United States. I will then carry this idea into the United States' attempt to coerce East Asian countries into trading agreements. Specifically focusing upon the USS General Sherman incident in 1866 along the Han River in Korea, I will have students read first the Korean account of the incident and then read the American account of the same incident. I would want students to focus upon the differences in the two accounts of the same incident. I would then ask the question "Where does the truth fall between the two contrasting explanations of this event?" How do we account for the differences in what happened? Hopefully, this will lead to an interesting discussion covering the concepts of openings, manifest destiny, and imperialism. At the end of this lesson I would want students to realize that reading history about East Asian countries from a U.S. history book might not represent an accurate point of view about the manner in which events actually occurred.

VI. **Materials-** copies of the USS General Sherman incident from a Korean writer and from an American observer of the event. Documents from the time period will be used to supplement this event (newspaper articles, etc).

VII. **Evaluation-** Students will be asked to write a short, persuasive essay on the USS General Sherman incident taking a position based upon what they have learned in this lesson.

VIII. **Follow-Up Lesson-** This lesson will lead to follow-up lessons on American imperialism in other parts of Asia including the Philippines, China, and other eastern Asian countries.

